

AN ACT

To amend sections 3317.01, 5705.31, 5705.32, and 5705.321 and to enact section 5705.60 of the Revised Code to modify the law governing county budget commissions and property taxation.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That sections 3317.01, 5705.31, 5705.32, and 5705.321 be amended and section 5705.60 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 3317.01. As used in this section, "school district," unless otherwise specified, means any city, local, exempted village, joint vocational, or cooperative education school district and any educational service center.

This chapter shall be administered by the department of education and workforce. The department of education and workforce shall calculate the amounts payable to each school district and shall certify the amounts payable to each eligible district to the treasurer of the district as provided by this chapter. Certification of moneys pursuant to this section shall include the amounts payable to each school building, at a frequency determined by the department, for each subgroup of students, as defined in section 3317.40 of the Revised Code, receiving services, provided for by state funding, from the district or school. No moneys shall be distributed pursuant to this chapter without the approval of the controlling board.

The department shall, in accordance with appropriations made by the general assembly, meet the financial obligations of this chapter.

Moneys distributed to school districts pursuant to this chapter shall be calculated based on the annual enrollment calculated from the three reports required under section 3317.03 of the Revised Code and paid on a fiscal year basis, beginning with the first day of July and extending through the thirtieth day of June. In any given fiscal year, prior to school districts submitting the first report required under section 3317.03 of the Revised Code, enrollment for the districts shall be calculated based on the third report submitted by the districts for the previous fiscal year. The moneys appropriated for each fiscal year shall be distributed periodically to each school district unless otherwise provided for. The department, in June of each year, shall submit to the controlling board the department's year-end distributions pursuant to this chapter.

Except as otherwise provided, payments under this chapter shall be made only to those school districts in which:

(A) The school district, except for any educational service center and any joint vocational or cooperative education school district, levies for current operating expenses at least twenty mills,

unless the school district is levying less than that amount due to a reduction in collections made under division (D) of section 5705.31 of the Revised Code or division (A) of section 5705.32 of the Revised Code relating to a declaration made by the board under division (E) of section 5705.29 of the Revised Code. Levies for joint vocational or cooperative education school districts or county school financing districts, limited to or to the extent apportioned to current expenses, shall be included in this qualification requirement. School district income tax levies under Chapter 5748. of the Revised Code, limited to or to the extent apportioned to current operating expenses, shall be included in this qualification requirement to the extent determined by the tax commissioner under division (C) of section 3317.021 of the Revised Code.

(B) The school year next preceding the fiscal year for which such payments are authorized meets the requirement of section 3313.48 of the Revised Code, with regard to the minimum number of hours school must be open for instruction with pupils in attendance, for individualized parent-teacher conference and reporting periods, and for professional meetings of teachers.

A school district shall not be considered to have failed to comply with this division because schools were open for instruction but either twelfth grade students were excused from attendance for up to the equivalent of three school days or only a portion of the kindergarten students were in attendance for up to the equivalent of three school days in order to allow for the gradual orientation to school of such students.

A board of education or governing board of an educational service center which has not conformed with other law and the rules pursuant thereto, shall not participate in the distribution of funds authorized by this chapter, except for good and sufficient reason established to the satisfaction of the department and the state controlling board.

All funds allocated to school districts under this chapter, except those specifically allocated for other purposes, shall be used to pay current operating expenses only.

Sec. 5705.31. The county auditor shall present to the county budget commission the annual tax budgets submitted under sections 5705.01 to 5705.47 of the Revised Code, together with an estimate prepared by the auditor of the amount of any state levy, the rate of any school tax levy as previously determined, the tax commissioner's estimate of the amount to be received in the county public library fund, the tax rates provided under section 5705.281 of the Revised Code if adoption of the tax budget was waived under that section, and such other information as the commission requests or the tax commissioner prescribes.

The budget commission shall examine such budget and, if the taxing authority is a board of education that has elected to include projections pursuant to division (E) of section 5705.391 of the Revised Code, shall examine such projections. Using the budget and, if applicable, included projections, the budget commission shall ascertain the total amount proposed to be raised in the county for the purposes of each subdivision and other taxing units in the county and the need for those amounts. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the county budget commission may reduce the amount to be raised by any levy pursuant to section 5705.32 of the Revised Code.

The commission shall ascertain that the following levies have been properly authorized and, if so authorized, shall approve them without modification:

(A) All levies in excess of the ten-mill limitation in the first year they are levied, unless the levy is the renewal of an existing tax or the subdivision or taxing unit requests an amount requiring a lower rate for the succeeding fiscal year. Such a request for an amount requiring a lower rate applies only to the succeeding fiscal year unless the subdivision or taxing unit expressly states that the request is permanent.

(B) All levies for unsatisfied debt charges, including levies that remain necessary to pay notes issued for emergency purposes;

(C) The levies prescribed by division (B) of sections 742.33 and 742.34 of the Revised Code;

(D) Except as otherwise provided in this division, a minimum levy within the ten-mill limitation for the current expense and debt service of each subdivision or taxing unit, which shall equal two-thirds of the average levy for current expenses and debt service allotted within the fifteen-mill limitation to such subdivision or taxing unit during the last five years the fifteen-mill limitation was in effect unless such subdivision or taxing unit requests an amount requiring a lower rate for the succeeding fiscal year, or if it expressed its intent to forgo collections from such a levy under division (E) of section 5705.29 of the Revised Code. Such a request for an amount requiring a lower rate applies only to the succeeding fiscal year unless the subdivision or taxing unit expressly states that the request is permanent.

Except as provided in section 5705.312 of the Revised Code, if the levies required in divisions (B) and (C) of this section for the subdivision or taxing unit equal or exceed the entire minimum levy of the subdivision as fixed, the minimum levies of the other subdivisions or taxing units shall be reduced by the commission to provide for the levies and an operating levy for the subdivision. Such additional levy shall be deducted from the minimum levies of each of the other subdivisions or taxing units, but the operating levy for a school district shall not be reduced below a figure equivalent to forty-five per cent of the millage available within the ten-mill limitation after all the levies in divisions (B) and (C) of this section have been provided for.

If a municipal corporation and a township have entered into an annexation agreement under section 709.192 of the Revised Code in which they agree to reallocate their shares of the minimum levies established under this division and if that annexation agreement is submitted along with the annual tax budget of both the township and the municipal corporation, then, when determining the minimum levy under this division, the auditor shall allocate, to the extent possible, the minimum levy for that municipal corporation and township in accordance with their annexation agreement.

Divisions (A) to (D) of this section are mandatory, and commissions shall be without discretion to reduce such minimum levies except as provided in such divisions.

If any debt charge is omitted from the budget, the commission shall include it therein.

Sec. 5705.32. (A) As used in this section:

(1) "Unnecessary collections" mean collections from a tax beyond the reasonably anticipated financial needs of the taxing authority for the specific purposes of the tax after accounting for current fund balances, projected expenditures, and other available funding sources.

(2) "Excessive collections" mean collections from a tax in an amount or at a rate that exceeds what is required to provide services at a level that is consistent with statutory obligations.

(B) The county budget commission shall adjust the estimated amounts required from the general property tax for each fund, as shown by the tax budgets or other information required to be provided under section 5705.281 of the Revised Code, so as to bring the tax levies required therefor within the limitations specified in sections 5705.01 to 5705.47 of the Revised Code, for such levies. The commission may revise and adjust the estimate of balances and receipts from all sources for each fund and shall determine the total appropriations that may be made therefrom.

If a taxing unit declared its intent to forgo all or a portion of collections under division (E) of section 5705.29 of the Revised Code, the commission shall adjust the rate of each levy as required to result in that reduction in collections.

~~(B)~~(C) Except as otherwise provided in section 5705.31 of the Revised Code, the county budget commission may adjust the estimated amounts required from the general property tax for each fund, as shown by the tax budgets or other information required to be provided under section 5705.281 of the Revised Code, so as to bring the tax levies required therefor within levels the commission finds reasonable and prudent to avoid unnecessary or excessive collections. Before reducing the amount or rate of any tax pursuant to this division, the commission shall provide the taxing authority of the levying taxing unit and the levying taxing unit an opportunity to present, at a public hearing, information either considers relevant to the questions of if and to what extent the levy should be reduced.

If the county budget commission adjusts amounts from any tax levied by a taxing unit that is not a qualifying subdivision, the adjustment shall be subject to both of the following:

(1) No levy shall be reduced below the level that would cause it to collect less than what the levy collected in the preceding year, unless funds are available from reserve balance accounts, nonexpendable trust funds, or carryover amounts to offset a reduction below that level, and the budget commission shall consider reserve balance accounts, nonexpendable trust funds, and carryover amounts for that purpose;

(2) No levy may be reduced under division (B) of this section to a level that would cause a school district subject to division (A) of section 3317.01 of the Revised Code to levy less than twenty mills for current operating expenses as required by that division.

(D) The commission shall fix the amount of the county public library fund to be distributed to each board of public library trustees that has qualified under section 5705.28 of the Revised Code for participation in the proceeds of such fund. The amount paid to all libraries in the county from such fund shall never be a smaller per cent of the fund than the average of the percentages of the county's classified taxes that were distributed to libraries in 1982, 1983, and 1984, as determined by

the county auditor. The commission shall base the amount for distribution on the needs of such library for the construction of new library buildings, parts of buildings, improvements, operation, maintenance, or other expenses. In determining the needs of each library board of trustees, and in calculating the amount to be distributed to any library board of trustees on the basis of its needs, the commission shall make no reduction in its allocation from the fund on account of additional revenues realized by a library from increased taxes or service charges voted by its electorate, from revenues received through federal or state grants, projects, or programs, or from grants from private sources.

~~(C)~~(E) Notwithstanding the fact that alternative methods of financing such needs are available, after fixing the amount to be distributed to libraries, the commission shall fix the amount, if any, of the county public library fund to be distributed to each board of township park commissioners, the county, and each municipal corporation in accordance with the following:

(1) Each municipal corporation in the county shall receive a per cent of the remainder that equals the per cent that the county auditor determines the classified property taxes originating in such municipal corporation in 1984 were of the total of all of the county's classified property taxes in 1984. The commission may deduct from this amount any amount that the budget commission allows to the board of township park commissioners of a township park district, the boundaries of which are coextensive with or contained within the boundaries of the municipal corporation.

(2) The county shall receive a per cent of the remainder that equals the per cent that the county auditor determines the classified property taxes originating outside of the boundaries of municipal corporations in the county in 1984 were of the total of all of the county's classified property taxes in 1984. The commission may deduct from this amount any amount that the budget commission allows to the board of township park commissioners of a township park district, the boundaries of which are not coextensive with or contained within those of any municipal corporation in the county.

~~(D)~~(F) The commission shall separately set forth the amounts fixed and determined under divisions ~~(B)~~(D) and ~~(C)~~(E) of this section in the "official certificate of estimated resources," as provided in section 5705.35 of the Revised Code, and separately certify such amount to the county auditor who shall be guided thereby in the distribution of the county public library fund for and during the fiscal year. In determining such amounts, the commission shall be guided by the estimate certified by the tax commissioner and presented by the auditor under section 5705.31 of the Revised Code, as to the total amount of revenue to be received in the county public library fund during such fiscal year.

~~(E)~~(1)~~(G)~~(1) At least five days before the date of any meeting at which the budget commission plans to discuss the distribution of the county public library fund, it shall notify each legislative authority and board of public library trustees, county commissioners, and township park commissioners eligible to participate in the distribution of the fund of the date, time, place, and agenda for the meeting. Any legislative authority or board entitled to notice under this division may

designate an officer or employee of such legislative authority or board to whom the commission shall deliver the notice.

(2) Before the final determination of the amount to be allotted to each subdivision from any source, the commission shall permit representatives of each subdivision and of each board of public library trustees to appear before it to explain its financial needs.

~~(F)~~(H) If any public library receives and expends any funds allocated to it under this section for the construction of new library buildings or parts of buildings, such library shall be free and open to the inhabitants of the county in which it is located. Any board of library trustees that receives funds under this section and section 5747.48 of the Revised Code shall have its financial records open for public inspection at all reasonable times.

Sec. 5705.321. (A) As used in this section:

(1) "City, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population" means the city, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population residing in the county; however, if the county budget commission on or before January 1, 1998, adopted an alternative method of apportionment that was approved by the city, located partially in the county, with the greatest population but not the greatest population residing in the county, "city, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population" means the city, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population whether residing in the county or not, if this alternative meaning is adopted by action of the board of county commissioners and a majority of the boards of township trustees and legislative authorities of municipal corporations located wholly or partially in the county.

(2) "Participating political subdivision" means a municipal corporation or township that satisfies all of the following:

- (a) It is located wholly or partially in the county.
- (b) It is not the city, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population.
- (c) Public library fund moneys are apportioned to it under the county's alternative method or formula of apportionment in the current calendar year.

(B) In lieu of the method of apportionment of the county public library fund provided by division ~~(C)~~(E) of section 5705.32 of the Revised Code, the county budget commission may provide for the apportionment of the fund under an alternative method or on a formula basis as authorized by this section.

Except as otherwise provided in division (C) of this section, the alternative method of apportionment shall have first been approved by all of the following governmental units: the board of county commissioners; the legislative authority of the city, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population; and a majority of the boards of township trustees and legislative authorities of municipal corporations, located wholly or partially in the county, excluding the legislative authority of the city, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population. In granting or denying approval for an alternative method of apportionment, the board of

county commissioners, boards of township trustees, and legislative authorities of municipal corporations shall act by motion. A motion to approve shall be passed upon a majority vote of the members of a board of county commissioners, board of township trustees, or legislative authority of a municipal corporation, shall take effect immediately, and need not be published.

Any alternative method of apportionment adopted and approved under this division may be revised, amended, or repealed in the same manner as it may be adopted and approved. If an alternative method of apportionment adopted and approved under this division is repealed, the county public library fund shall be apportioned among the subdivisions eligible to participate in the fund, commencing in the ensuing calendar year, under the apportionment provided in divisions ~~(B)~~ (C) and ~~(C)(D)~~ of section 5705.32 of the Revised Code, unless the repeal occurs by operation of division (C) of this section or a new method for apportionment of the fund is provided in the action of repeal.

(C) This division applies only in counties in which the city, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population has a population of twenty thousand or less and a population that is less than fifteen per cent of the total population of the county. In such a county, the legislative authorities or boards of township trustees of two or more participating political subdivisions, which together have a population residing in the county that is a majority of the total population of the county, each may adopt a resolution to exclude the approval otherwise required of the legislative authority of the city, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population. All of the resolutions to exclude that approval shall be adopted not later than the first Monday of August of the year preceding the calendar year in which distributions are to be made under an alternative method of apportionment.

A motion granting or denying approval of an alternative method of apportionment under this division shall be adopted by a majority vote of the members of the board of county commissioners and by a majority vote of a majority of the boards of township trustees and legislative authorities of the municipal corporations located wholly or partially in the county, other than the city, located wholly or partially in the county, with the greatest population, shall take effect immediately, and need not be published. The alternative method of apportionment under this division shall be adopted and approved annually, not later than the first Monday of August of the year preceding the calendar year in which distributions are to be made under it. A motion granting approval of an alternative method of apportionment under this division repeals any existing alternative method of apportionment, effective with distributions to be made from the fund in the ensuing calendar year. An alternative method of apportionment under this division shall not be revised or amended after the first Monday of August of the year preceding the calendar year in which distributions are to be made under it.

(D) In determining an alternative method of apportionment authorized by this section, the county budget commission may include in the method any factor considered to be appropriate and reliable, in the sole discretion of the county budget commission.

(E) On the basis of any alternative method of apportionment adopted and approved as authorized by this section, as certified by the auditor to the county treasurer, the county treasurer shall make distribution of the money in the county public library fund to each subdivision eligible to participate in the fund, and the auditor, when the amount of those shares is in the custody of the treasurer in the amounts so computed to be due the respective subdivisions, shall at the same time certify to the tax commissioner the percentage share of the county as a subdivision. All money received into the treasury of a subdivision from the county public library fund in a county treasury shall be paid into the general fund and used for the current operating expenses of the subdivision.

(F) The actions of the county budget commission taken pursuant to this section are final and may not be appealed to the board of tax appeals, except on the issues of abuse of discretion and failure to comply with the formula.

Sec. 5705.60. (A) As used in this section, "qualifying fixed-sum levy" means a tax levied on property at whatever rate is required to produce a specified amount of tax money, including a tax levied under section 5705.199 of the Revised Code, but not including a tax levied in excess of the ten-mill limitation to pay debt charges.

(B) Each year, the tax commissioner shall determine by what amount, if any, the rate of a qualifying fixed sum levy must be changed for the levy to produce the levy's specified amount of money for the current tax year. The tax commissioner shall certify the amount determined for each fixed-sum levy to the appropriate county auditor by the first day of September.

(C) Each county auditor to whom a rate change is certified under division (B) of this section shall apply the adjusted rate for the current tax year.

SECTION 2. That existing sections 3317.01, 5705.31, 5705.32, and 5705.321 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

Speaker _____ *of the House of Representatives.*

President _____ *of the Senate.*

Passed _____, 20____

Approved _____, 20____

Governor.

Sub. H. B. No. 309

136th G.A.

The section numbering of law of a general and permanent nature is complete and in conformity with the Revised Code.

Director, Legislative Service Commission.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Columbus, Ohio, on the ____ day of _____, A. D. 20____.

Secretary of State.

File No. _____ Effective Date _____